/157 cont./

881 manhood. In the case of girls no special preparation occurs. As soon as a girl has her first menstrual period, people from neighboring and friendly settlements assemble for a great celebration. The girl lies prone on the ground while old women form the orchestra near her, singing and clapping their hands. The younger [535] women stamp /158/ along in goose step, their buttocks exposed. Individual men from time to time enter the circle and all of them imitate the movements and sounds of rutting animals. I believe that this is the eland bull dance. A girl may marry [582] only after the onset of the first menses.

S. Birth and Death

The birth takes place in the open air outside the settlement. 844 The woman sits on the ground with the upper part of her body propped up and her knees drawn up.

Reviving apparently stillborn children by rubbing their limbs [845] and bodies is practiced.

Old women assist at the birth. In difficult cases, for instance, when the woman is ill at the time of the birth, the "doctor" is called in.

The doctor, among other means that he employs, is supposed to relieve a difficult birth by performing a kind of sucking with his mouth at the vagina.

When he assists at a birth, the doctor murmurs magical formulas.

The umbilical cord is severed with the sharp edge of a reed splinter, never with any other object. Practical reasons for this could not be given: "It has always been so."

The man slings his bowstring around the body of the woman in labor. Then he goes away and during the birth stays in his hut.

I was unable to determine any symbolic significance in the use of the bowstring. The explanation was: "The birth is easier."

[846] The woman who has given birth is spared as long as a month after delivery and does not need to work.

The newborn child is wiped off with the nest of the weaver bird (?). In no case is water used.

606 his mother-law, it is necessary to speak to anybody in her hut, he will keep at a distance and depart as soon as he sees her approaching. They never refer to each other by name but always as " my son-in-law " or " my mother-in-law." The son-in-law does not associate with his father-in-law but similarly avoids him and should they meet accidently they may exchange greetings but no general conversation will take place nor will they look each other in the face.

847 Abortion is sometimes practised early in pregnancy in the case of both married and unmarried women. It is procured by external manipulation of the uterus and not through the agency of drugs.

844 A pregnant woman is generally treated with great consideration. For the first confinement it is customary for her to return to her mother's group. Among the *Hei-||om* the labour is conducted in the camp. Among the more primitive Kalahari Bushmen the woman leaves the camp as soon as the first symptoms appear and is attended to by her mother or some other old woman underneath a tree some distance away. Tufts of grass are uprooted and placed upside down on the tree as a warning to men that a labour is in progress. The mother returns to the camp immediately after the birth of the child and for a week or more subsequently is relieved of such duties as gathering wood and veldkos, fetching water, etc. In the event of a mother dying during childbirth the infant is reared by the grandmother or by some friend who desires a child. When it cannot be disposed of in this manner it is buried alive with the mother. Illegitimate births are not common among the primitive communities. When they do occur the children are usually put to death. Pregnancies follow in rapid succession during the course of married life but owing to the high mortality among infants caused by the strenuous conditions of life very few children survive. Further, among the Bushmen of the Kalahari child murder is practised. Children are suckled until they are able to walk well. If a new child is born while the last one is still on the breast it is buried alive in the nearest burrow or in a hole made for the purpose by the old woman who conducted the labour. When twins are born one is invariably killed. It is for these reasons that it is rare to find families of five or more children in the Kalahari. On an average only two or three children survive infancy and early childhood. Among the Bushmen of the Oschimpoloveld and Ovamboland larger families are met with. Brother and sister avoidance is met with in some but not in all tribes. There is no special ceremony in connection with the naming of children. Among the *Hei-||om* each child is generally given three names, namely a first name, a second name and a surname. Names are not given by the parents. The first name may be given by the father's mother and the second name by the

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date)1930
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is no information about special pregnancy observances in any of the other tribes. 843

Among the North-Western tribes, the only ones of whom we have adequate information on this point, the labour is sometimes conducted in the camp, but generally, as soon as the first symptoms appear, the woman leaves the huts, and the birth takes place in the open, some distance away.[1] Lebzelter says of the Kung that only women giving birth for the first time are confined in the camp; the others go out into the open veld. Whether this also applies to the other tribes is not clearly indicated. Wherever delivery may take place, a little soft grass is collected, on which the woman rests. Assistance is given by her mother and some other old women. There do not appear to be any special midwives. Men may not be present at delivery. Among the Heikum tufts of grass are uprooted and placed upside down on a tree as a warning to them that labour is in progress. Among the Auen the husband of the woman fastens his bowstring round her body; then he goes away and remains in his hut until the birth has taken place. There does not seem to be any determinate symbolic meaning attaching to this act; the explanation given to Kaufmann was that it facilitated the birth. There is no record from any of the other tribes of a similar act in which the husband is ritually linked up with the birth, except among the Kung, where, according to Lebzelter, the woman as soon as delivery is imminent must step over the legs of her husband, who has previously rubbed "medicine" into cuts made in his calves. 844

A different usage is mentioned incidentally by Seydel in connection with birth-giving among the Namib Bushmen.[2] When labour is far advanced the woman's husband makes a small fire outside the hut in which she is confined, and carefully keeps it going. No pot may be placed on this fire, nor may anything be cooked or roasted over it. It is believed that if this custom is neglected both mother and new-born child will go blind. After the birth another larger fire is kindled alongside the previous one as a sign of rejoicing, irrespective of the sex of the child. [753] [846]

During labour the woman sits on the ground with knees upraised and her back supported, and is roughly massaged by the attendant women. For the act of birth itself, which generally is not prolonged,

[1] The principal descriptions of birth customs are given by Passarge, *Die Buschmänner*, 98–9; Kaufmann, "Die Auin," 158; Seiner, "Bereisung der Omaheke," 292; D. F. Bleek, *The Naron*, 30; Fourie, "Bushmen of S.W. Africa," 94; Lebzelter, loc. cit.

[2] Seydel, op. cit., 504.

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844 she lies on her side. The umbilical cord is not tied, but cut with a knife; the Auen use the sharp edge of a reed for this purpose, never anything else. A plaster of mud and leaves is put on the baby's abdomen, if there is much bleeding. Before, during, and immediately after the birth the mother may not be washed with water, nor may the child, which is simply wiped off with the soft grass and put into its mother's kaross. Among the Auen, when birth is difficult or when, [845] e.g., the woman is ill at the time of delivery, the magician is called in [755] to lighten the process, which he attempts to do by sucking with his mouth at the vagina and by "murmuring spells". This is the only instance recorded of any magical assistance being given at birth.

Immediately after the child is born and wiped clean it is simply ●846 put into the kaross of its mother, who then returns to the camp. Among the Heikum and the Auen she is now for a week or more relieved of her normal daily duties, such as gathering wood and veldkos, fetching water, etc. Among the Naron, however, she is said to resume her ordinary avocations immediately. Occasionally [845] harder births occur, and then the woman may be quiet for a few days, if she pulls through; but a really difficult birth means the death of both mother and child, as no method of helping is known save massage.

In the event of the mother dying during or shortly after childbirth, [853] some other woman may suckle the child and rear it, if it lives; but [847] more often than not it is buried alive with its mother, especially among the wilder bands.

In this connection reference may be made to a practice recorded 853 by Seiner of the Kung, but not reported by any of the other writers on this or other tribes. He states the belief exists that if a child is placed too soon at its mother's breast both will die. Immediately after it is born the infant is therefore handed over to another woman to be suckled. Often enough, however, there is no suitable woman in the small band, and so the hungry infant makes futile attempts at several different dry breasts, to be returned finally, strengthless and dying, to the arms of its mother. He attributes the great infant [165] mortality chiefly to this practice, which often results in the infant's not receiving its mother's breast until too late.

845 Twin births are said to be very rare. Among the Auen and the 847 Heikum one of twins is invariably killed by being buried alive by the mother or one of her attendants immediately after the birth. If the children are of opposite sexes, it is always the boy who is killed in this way. Among the Kung, again, both are buried alive at birth, for it is